

Lesson 5 – Sin

I know I am saved, but why do I still sin? Why can't I get victory over sin? As Christians we are not sinless, but we should sin less. We are not perfect, and we all must deal with the continual problem of sin.

Sin is a universal human problem. It's something we all do. But have you ever stopped to ask why? Why can't we decide not to sin and then never disobey God again?

The apostle Paul expressed this frustration with sin: *For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. Romans 7:15.*

Not everyone wants to sin, but everyone does. Why do we so often fall short of God's standards and our own expectations? What exactly is this “sinful nature” we hear so much about?

In this lesson we will explore sin, the reasons we sin and what we can do about it.

WHAT IS SIN?

Sin is simply breaking God's laws, any unrighteousness, or doing anything apart from faith. *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 1 John 3:4*

All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death. 1 John 5:17

But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin. Rom 14:23

WHY DO I SIN?

You sin because of the sinful nature you inherited from Adam. *Therefore, just as through one-man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. Rom 5:12*

This sin nature draws you into sin. *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:13-15*

You sin because you are tempted in 3 major areas that are spoken of in 1 John. *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 1 John 2:15-16*

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DEALING WITH SIN – HOW CAN I OVERCOME IT?

Being good and trying not to sin is not going to give you the victory you want over sin.

Thank God that when we find ourselves in sin we can pray and ask God to forgive us and He will forgive us when we ask. *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:9-10*

However, it doesn't guarantee that you won't be back in the same place of sin in a matter of time. If you don't train your spirit, mind and body, you will continue to follow your old way of life from which Jesus set you free. Even though you are technically free in Jesus, you will continue to be a slave to sin. But the good news is that there is a way to break the bondage of sin.

Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise, you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Rom 6:9-14

Jesus took care of the sin problem. We need to allow His grace to come into our lives and liberate us from the bondage of sin. Romans the sixth chapter describes sin as bondage; sin will hold people in bondage and keep them from being the people that God has designed them to be.

So, if Jesus made a way for us to be free from sin, why do I still do what is wrong? If you live in this natural world you will have your flesh to contend with.

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in

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the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Gal 5:13-26

You can't pray your flesh away. You must train your flesh; teach it to do right by putting the Word of God in your heart, feeding your spirit man.

Watch and pray, lest you enter temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak Mark 14:38

Your body will follow the strongest voice. You are a 3 part being: you are a spirit, you have a soul (mind, will, & emotions) and you live in a body. Your body will follow your soul or your spirit, whichever is stronger. If your mind is not renewed according to the Word, it will lead you down the wrong path. But if your spirit man is built up and strong, it will dominate your flesh and keep your life holy. The apostle Paul speaks about keeping his body under submission to his spirit.

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. 1 Cor 9:27

The key to winning the fight against sin and the flesh is to put God's Word into your heart. *Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. Ps 119:11*

Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. Rom 12:21

The good of God's Word will enable us to overcome any kind of sin or temptation that we might face. We can't fight sin in our minds or stop sinning by our own efforts. We must allow God to work through us to bring us victory.

...For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John 5:4-5

When we speak of dealing with sin, we often use terms relating to sin that are difficult to understand. These terms are sanctification, holiness, redemption, obedience and righteousness. I thought it would be beneficial if we took a closer look at some of these terms and defined them for you.

What is Sanctification? Strong's' Concordance defines it as "purification". It also means to "separate out from". Sanctification is a process by which believers become separated from the evil in the world and commit themselves to a life of holiness before God. It's a process; it doesn't happen all at one time; it is not automatic. Sanctification is a choice you make to live a holy life and to separate yourself from ungodliness.

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Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”

2 Cor 6:17

The word “separate” here in Greek is “aphorizo” and means “to set off by boundary, to limit, exclude”. God wants you to separate from the world; He wants you to mark out clear boundaries and limits from ungodliness. We see many instructions in the Word of God where God instructs His people to separate themselves. And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him,

“Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments.”

Gen 35:2

Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD. Isa 52:11

For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

Lev 11:44

How can I be Holy? What benefit did you reap from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 6:23

Jesus made a way for you to be free from sin. You now have the power to live a holy life through Jesus Christ. *Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor 7:1*

Finally, then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. 1 Thess 4:1-7

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. Heb 12:14

What is Redemption? The definition of the word redemption refers to salvation from sin, death, and the wrath of God by Christ’s sacrifice. It also means deliverance by payment of a price, to tear loose, to rescue, or to give a ransom.

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Redemption is a finished work completed by Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. It is “in Him” that we find redemption. It is good to know that you have already been redeemed; you have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

To understand this truth more fully, as you read through the New Testament any place you see the words “in Him”, “by” or “with Him” or “through Christ”, know that these are truths about what Christ accomplished on your behalf.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Eph 1:7

*In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried **with Him** in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. Col 2:11-12*

The good news is that Christ redeemed us for a purpose. He paid the price so that we could be free and has delivered us so that He could bless us and give us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Col 1:13-14

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom 3:23-24

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Gal 3:13-14

What is Obedience? *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Isa 1:19-20*

Everyone likes it when you talk about eating the good of the land and experiencing God’s very best but notice that these only come when you are willing and obedient. Being willing speaks of the attitude of your heart; you can be obedient and still be unwilling in your heart. This kind of attitude will disqualify you from God’s blessings in your life. Not only do you have to be obedient, you must also be willing to receive God’s best.

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When we look at the different people in the Bible, we see that they accomplished great and mighty things by faith. Many times, people walk away with the impression that all we need is faith, but there is more to the picture than just believing God. You must walk in obedience.

*By faith Abraham **obeyed** when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. Heb 11:8*

Notice here that Abraham was a great man of faith, but it says that he obeyed God. In order to walk by faith, you will have to walk in obedience. *For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. Luke 6:43-44*

Everyone will be known by his or her fruit. When your life is committed to God and you put Him first in all that you do, you will produce good fruit in your life and it will be evident to all. *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2 Tim 2:20-21*

Sometimes people read this passage and think, “well with whatever kind of vessel God wants me to be I will be content”. The truth of the matter is that **you** decide what kind of vessel you will be. **You** determine the kind of vessel you are. **You** must cleanse yourself, purging your life from all sin.

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. Ps 119:9-11

We need to allow God to remove the things from our lives that are not pleasing to Him.

What is Righteousness? Righteousness is simply being in right standing or having a right relationship with God. The believer must know and understand the benefits of righteousness and how it operates in our lives to be able to participate in all that God has provided for His children.

For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might

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reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Rom 5:17-6:1

If you do not know that you are righteous, you cannot experience the grace of God.

a.) How can I become aware of righteousness in my own life? You need to be more aware of righteousness than you are of your sins. ‘Sin consciousness’ is always being aware of your sin and shortcomings. This will produce thoughts of inferiority, worthlessness, failure, weakness and guilt. But someone who is aware of their righteousness in God will be free from thoughts of guilt. Understanding your righteousness will terminate the power of guilt in your life.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So, I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.” Isa 6:1-7

This is a good example of sin consciousness and the effects that it will have on a person. It produces inferiority and guilt; you’ll never be effective for God with this kind of thinking. Sin consciousness will rob you of your spiritual authority.

b.) How can I change my thinking from sin consciousness to being aware of my righteousness in Christ? You need to understand that when you were born again you became a new creation, the old has passed away.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new! 2 Cor 5:17. You are not going to be a new creation - you already are!

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. Ezek 36:26-28

Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Rom 6:6

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c.) How do I obtain righteousness?

Therefore, by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Rom 3:20-30

You become righteous by faith, not by good works; it's a gift of God's grace. Good works and bad works have to do with holiness, not righteousness. (*See also Romans 4:1-11*)

If you try to establish your own righteousness through good deeds and trying to be good, you'll miss it. That is self- righteousness, which is unacceptable to God. Righteousness is totally based on faith.

...and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; Phil 3:9

d.) What's the difference between righteousness and holiness? Righteousness is right standing with God. Holiness refers to our moral behavior and thinking. Righteousness is something you have by faith; it's how God looks at you. Holiness speaks of the lifestyle in which you live.

e.) How can I walk in the righteousness that God has given? Recognize the gift of righteousness in your life and speak the Word over your life.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Rom 8:1

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil 4:13

The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? Ps 27:1

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16

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You are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus!

HOW CAN I BE FORGIVEN?

Acknowledge that you have sinned. You can never correct a situation until you are willing to face up to your responsibilities. Realize that, in Christ, you have forgiveness of sins and judge yourself.

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 1 Cor 11:31

Judge yourself; acknowledge that you missed it and ask God to forgive you. God wants us to judge ourselves so that He will not have to judge us. We can receive forgiveness by faith, knowing that we are in Christ and that the blood of Jesus washes away our sins; Jesus has paid the price for sin. The thought of repentance carries the idea of going in another direction. That is what we should do with sin. We turn away from our sins and turn and go in the other direction. *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Rom 13:14* and go to God.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Gal 5:16

THOUGHTS

To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men. *Abraham Lincoln*

On a personal level, everyone must answer the following question: What is my highest aspiration? The answer might be wealth, fame, knowledge, popularity, or integrity. But if integrity is secondary to any of the alternatives, it will be sacrificed in situations in which a choice must be made. *Murphy Smith*

Let no pleasure tempt thee, no profit allure thee, no persuasion move thee, to do anything which thou knowest to be evil; so shalt thou always live jollity; for a good conscience is a continual Christmas. *Benjamin Franklin*

In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you. *Warren Buffet CEO, Berkshire Hathaway*

It takes less time to do a thing right than to explain why you did it wrong. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

A person who is fundamentally honest doesn't need a code of ethics. The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are all the ethical code anybody needs. *Harry S. Truman*

In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will rise up a thousandfold in the future. When we neither punish nor

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reproach evildoers . . . we are ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations.
Alexander Solzhenitsyn

POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SIN

- I don't have to confess my sin, God already knows.
- I'm only hurting myself not anyone else.
- My sin only affects me and not others.
- Sin doesn't hinder prayer life.
- Telling your thoughts to another will resolve sin.
- Little sins are ok, God doesn't care about the little ones.

From this lesson you should know that these misconceptions are wrong, and why.

MEMORY VERSES

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. Ps 1:1

For Your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Ps 25:11

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:9-10

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 6:23

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Rom 8:2

For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil. 1 Peter 3:12

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Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 2 Cor 7:9-11

QUESTIONS FROM THIS LESSON

Please answer the following questions:

1) Can you define sin?

2) Can you name 3 terms that relate to the subject of sin?

3) How can you know that you are forgiven?
